

DEDICATION OF THE TABLET

IN COMMEMORATION OF

The Old Tunnel

BY THE

LYNN HISTORICAL SOCIETY



PLACED ON THE MEETING-HOUSE OF THE

First Congregational Church
LYNN, MASS.

June Thirteenth, Nineteen Hundred Nine

The Old Tunnel

AN HISTORICAL CENTER

While in an ecclesiastical sense, the Old Tunnel which forms the emblem of the seal of the Lynn Historical Society was only one of the five meeting houses on various portions of the parish tract occupied by the same living church, yet this tablet commemorates the venerable structure more especially as a forum for the people of Lynn during the century and a quarter when the Puritans solved problems of local self-government, developed an isolated theocratic Colony into an enduring Commonwealth, and established the New England Confederacy which was the precursor of the United States.

Their conscious strength imparted a spirit of liberty, and independence, which was known and feared in England.

The dies of the Pine Tree coinage, which were designed and sunk at the Saugus Iron Works in 1652, was the first act of independence by its treasonable omission of any reference to the King.

John Evelyn's diary, May 26, 1671, says of this people, "There was a fear of their breaking away from all dependence on this nation (England)," and on August 3, 1671, the Council voted to send a deputy to the Colony on an ostensible mission, but "secretly to learn whether they were of such power as to resist his Majesty, and to declare for themselves."

In this Meeting House, the separation of town and parish, March 5, 1721-22, was an unprecedented step towards civic freedom and religious liberty, being a forerunner of the separation of Church and State.

To recount the deeds wrought in this edifice would require a paraphrase of the History of Massachusetts reaching to events beyond its borders.

The people here took action and furnished men and munitions for the wars with savages, the French and the Mother Country.

Practically every Lynn man able to bear arms was in his country's service at some time during the eight years of the Revolution.

The militia were organized and equipped with hunting rifles, which proved to be so much superior to the Kings' Arms of the Regulars as to change tactics and accoutrements, in every army in Europe.

The town did not furnish men recruited directly from the plough, but trained troops ready to be summoned by a couple of shots — Minute Men.

A town meeting went bodily to Boston in 1688 to oppose the tyranny of Andros the Colonial Governor. Other meetings resisted the demand of Charles II, for the surrender of the Charter of Massachusetts Bay, protests were made against the stamp act of 1765, and the following year its repeal celebrated by bell and guns.

In 1744 the Town laid in a stock of powder which was kept under the floor of the meeting house, and another supply procured in 1774 as the war of the revolution was long foreseen.

When English Men-of-War arrived in Boston, September 28, 1768, to overawe the Colony, Lynn held a fast day.

The town denounced the tax on tea May 24, 1770.

On December 16, 1773, a town meeting passed resolutions asserting their "right of freedom" — the famous Declaration at Philadelphia followed later, on July 4, 1776.

These town meetings and other civic occasions were held in this meeting house until 1806, after which it became a purely ecclesiastical edifice.

Many records are missing, some of them impaired, and the remainder are disappointing in their brevity, but the vestiges establish its character as an historical center of great worth in its day and to be prized as a heritage of American citizenship.

THE MEETING HOUSE

This memorial tablet was modeled in clay by Charles A. Lawrence of Lynn, and cast in bronze by the Murdock-Shaw Company of Boston.

The bas relief is based upon a sketch by Alonzo Lewis, showing the western entrance, and represents the structure in 1771 after the belfry had been placed on the bell deck, and before the gables had been removed.

The meeting house was situated on a knoll in the middle of the Common, diagonally opposite the present First Congregational Meeting House, and to the west of the present flagstaff, and a bank wall ran across the Common on the easterly side of this elevation.

The building was framed of oak and was about 44 by 50 feet. It was white-washed inside and clapboarded and painted outside. The middle of the hipped roof bore a square bell deck, which was covered with lead in 1699. The roof was open underneath and not sheathed until 1737.

Gift

The Society

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The roof timbers were hewn from oak trees felled on the Common and the remainder of the lumber was cut in Meeting House Swamp in the Lynn Woods. Galleries ranged on three sides and were reached by stairways in the rear corners.

The bell rope hung near the center aisle and an enclosed space among the pews was provided for the ringer. The windows were glazed with diamond-shaped panes set in lead sashes which swung on hinges. These windows were secured November 12, 1772, to prevent breaking of glass. On June 30, 1775, it was "voted to sell the old windows for what they would fetch," the evident purpose at that time, being the expected need of bullets.

At first the pews were open benches as in English churches, but severe winters caused the Puritans to devise closed pews which would hold the heat of the foot-stoves. These pews were pens, some of oak and others of pine, differing in size and shape, generally with scroll work on the tops, and closed by doors, and the seats around the inside with sometimes a chair or two in the middle. These box pews were removed December 11, 1811, and new pews built.

The locations of these pews were doubtless the cause of the controversies which required a council November 10, 1691, including Rev. Cotton Mather and Samuel Sewall, afterwards Chief Justice, to settle, by a decision, "wherein both parties were blamed," and the assignment of locations was made January 8, 1692, when others were given seats in the pulpit, the deacons' seat and at the (communion) table, respectively, by vote of the town.

A pew in the gallery was reserved for negroes (slaves) of which there were twenty-six at the time of their abolition in 1780. Hannibal, a slave of Deacon John Lewis, was sexton for many years, and the "allowances to Deacon John Lewis" on the account book are supposed to have been for his services.

Among the duties of sexton as fixed February 26, 1724-25, was "to turn the (hour) glass and to see that it may properly perform," an important function that the flow of the sand should not be stopped when sermons ranged from over an hour to nearly two hours in length.

In the course of 145 years the many repairs were accompanied by changes.

In 1716 porches were added and an oak pulpit and sounding board imported from England; the latter can now be seen in the Second Universalist Meeting House. In 1737 a new roof was built and other extensive repairs made.

The bell was in the open on the bell deck until 1771, when the "ornament designed by Mr. (Timothy?) Walton" as a belfry was built and gave to the building its time-honored nickname of the Old Tunnel.

When the building was moved from the Common, this belfry remained on the ground until sold by auction, April 23, 1827, when it was moved through Market St., and to various sites and owners until 1842, when it was bought by John LeBeau, who moved it to 18 Hutchinson Court, where the belfry was used as a shoemaker's shop by four workmen, and the owner lived in the upper or "tunnel" portion, until it was burned Sunday evening, March 25, 1849.

The building evidently had a chimney, probably only in its later days, as bricks were among the articles sold at the auction mentioned above.

The bell was first referred to in Samuel Sewall's account of the Council of 1691. This bell was sent to England in 1699 in exchange for a new one, which later became cracked in celebrating the news of the Peace of Ghent and the Battle of New Orleans, both of which reached Lynn by the same messenger at 10 A.M., February 13, 1815. This was recast by Paul Revere & Son in 1816, and cracked by a fire alarm and recast by William Blake in 1878, and is still in service in the Second Universalist Meeting House.

The civic history of this remarkable edifice terminated when the town gave the Parish \$250, to which was added \$100 in subscriptions outside of the Parish, and the Old Tunnel was moved to the corner of South Common and Commercial Streets April 11, 1827, by Captain Joseph A. Lloyd, by means of ten yoke of oxen driven by David Harwood, and with many subsequent enlargements constitutes the present Second Universalist Meeting House, where the old oak frame bids fair to remain staunch for as many years to come.

Although built with funds obtained by general taxation, there is not in any of the records any formal transfer or other reference to any consideration for this change of property from a public ownership to that of a religious society, but in lack of any information to the contrary, it appears to have been a matter of common consent.

In the perspective of present years, the omissions in the records of the past give rise to many interesting but unsolvable conjectures, and it is sincerely hoped that the town records which contain substantially all the information of the vigorous patriotism of our forbears may be printed before destructive conditions render them illegible.

C. J. H. WOODBURY.

.. Programme ..

3.00 P. M.

Organ Prelude—Fantasie *Gustav Merkel*

Hymn 1309—"Uxbridge" *Dr. Lowell Mason*
(*The congregation will rise and join in singing.*)

Invocation

REV. FREDERIC W. PERKINS, D.D., *Pastor First Universalist Church.*

Dedication Address

BENJAMIN NEWHALL JOHNSON, *President Lynn Historical Society.*

Anthem—"Jerusalem, My Glorious Home" . . . *Dr. Lowell Mason*

Acceptance of the Custody of the Tablet

HENRY RICHARDSON FRENCH, *Chairman of the Standing Committee
and Assessors, First Congregational Society.*

Scripture—Ecclesiasticus XLIV, 1-10; Matthew V, 13-16;
Revelation XXI, 1-7.

REV. ALBERT LAZENBY, *Pastor Second Congregational (Unitarian) Society.*

The Relation of the Church to the Civic Life of the Community

REV. GEORGE WILLIAM OWEN, *Pastor First Congregational Church.*

Anthem—"Festival Te Deum" *Dudley Buck*

Poem—"The Old Tunnel." *By the late James Warren Newhall, 1882*
Read by EARL A. MOWER.

Address on behalf of the City of Lynn

ARTHUR E. SANTRY, *President of the Common Council.*

Hymn 1312—"Duke Street" *J. Hatton*
(*The congregation will rise and join in singing.*)

Benediction

REV. J. FRANKLIN KNOTTS, *Pastor First Methodist Episcopal Church*

Postlude—"The Hallelujah Chorus," from "The Messiah" *Händel*
Miss MABEL J. VAUGHAN, *Organist.*

Unveiling

*After the Service, the congregation will assemble in front of the Meeting-House
and sing "America," when the Tablet will be unveiled by Miss VIRGINIA LOUISE
CARR, a descendant of Rev. Stephen Bachiler, the first Minister of this Church,
1632-1636.*

Lynn Historical Society

BENJAMIN NEWHALL JOHNSON, *President*

GEORGE HENRY MARTIN, *Vice-President*

JOHN ALBREE, *Recording Secretary*

WILLIAM STOCKER BURRILL, *Corresponding Secretary*

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C. J. H. WOODBURY

Committee of the First Congregational Parish

GUILFORD S. NEWHALL, *Chairman*

PAUL W. BRICKETT

HERBERT W. RICE

C. J. H. WOODBURY

AMERICA

1 My country! 'tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty,
Of thee I sing:
Land where my fathers died!
Land of the Pilgrim's pride!
From every mountain side
Let freedom ring!

2 My native country, thee —
Land of the noble free —
Thy name — I love;
I love thy rocks and rills,
Thy woods and templed hills:
My heart with rapture thrills
Like that above.

3 Let music swell the breeze,
And ring from all the trees
Sweet freedom's song:
Let mortal tongues awake;
Let all that breathe partake;
Let rocks their silence break,—
The sound prolong.

4 Our fathers' God! to Thee,
Author of liberty,
To Thee we sing:
Long may our land be bright
With freedom's holy light;
Protect us by Thy might,
Great God, our King!

Ministers

Holding Pastorates in the Old Tunnel

JEREMIAH SHEPARD

Ordained, October 6, 1680.

Died, June 2, 1720

JOSEPH WHITING (Colleague)

Ordained, October 6, 1680.

Dismissed, July, 1682

Died, April 7, 1723

NATHANIEL HENCHMAN

Ordained, December 17, 1720.

Died, December 23, 1761

JOHN TREADWELL

Ordained, March 2, 1763.

Dismissed, March, 1782

Died, January 5, 1811

OBADIAH PARSONS

Installed, February 4, 1784.

Dismissed, July 16, 1792

Died, December, 1801

THOMAS CUSHING THATCHER

Ordained August 13, 1794.

Dismissed, February 3, 1813

Died, September 24, 1849

ISAAC HURD, S.T.D.

Ordained, September 15, 1813.

Dismissed, May 22, 1816

Died, October 4, 1856

OTIS ROCKWOOD

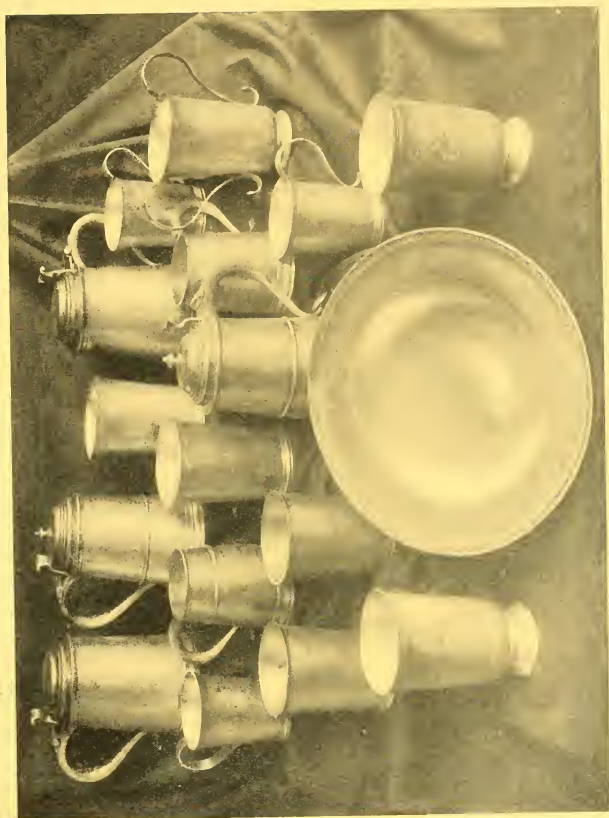
Ordained, July 1, 1818.

Dismissed, May 23, 1832

Died, December 30, 1861

All of the above were graduates of Harvard College.

Ordination also included installation. Dismissals were made by ecclesiastic councils, which may have been initiated by either the Minister or the Church.



THE COLONIAL COMMUNION SET

DONORS.

Two beakers from L. C. (unknown) made by JOHN CONY, who died in 1722.
Two tankards, and two beakers from Dr. JOHN HENRY BURCHSTED, Sept. 25, 1721, made by ANDREW TYLER.

Two tankards and two beakers from Hon. JOHN BURRILL, Dec. 10, 1721, made by ANDREW TYLER.

Beaker from RALPH TONKIN, 1726, silversmith unknown.

Tankard from Capt. JOHN BREED, Dec. 14, 1728, made by JACOB HURD.

Tankard, two beakers and a bread plate from Col. THEOPHILUS BURRILL, July 4, 1737, made by JACOB HURD.

One beaker, donor and silversmith unknown.

This will be on exhibition in front of the pulpit after the Tablet is unveiled.

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